



វិទ្យាស្ថានបណ្តុះបណ្តាល និង គ្រោងជ្រាបនិងឃើញអភិវឌ្ឍន៍កម្ពុជា

CDRI – Cambodia's leading independent development policy research institute

**Think Tank Capacity Building
for Better Policy Impact:
CDRI 25 years' experience**

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**Cambodian Development Resources Institute
Cambodia**

Purpose: Sharing CDRI's 25 years of experience as a leading think tank in Cambodia.

“An organization is only as strong as its people and its partners”

How did CDRI develop its intellectual capital?

How did CDRI engage with partners and donors while maintaining its independence?

INTRODUCTION

Vision for Cambodia

CDRI's vision is for a prosperous, inclusive and integrated Cambodia that continues to make progress in sustainable development and poverty reduction, democratisation, natural resource management, and gender equity.

Vision for CDRI

CDRI is an independent and resilient centre of research excellence for innovative ideas to influence policy that impacts on Cambodia's development.

Mission statement

CDRI's mission is to generate high quality, influential and impactful knowledge through policy research and capacity development to contribute to Cambodia's prosperity.

Shared core values

- M** We create the professional conditions that nurture **merit**.
- E** We foster **excellence**, as a professional and personal habit.
- R** We practice a culture of **respect** and **responsibility**.
- I** We pledge to live and act with **independence** and **integrity**.
- T** We build deep **trust**, **transparency** and **teamwork**, capable of achieving the mission and vision of the Institute.

Independence VS Engagement

Affirmed by the independent appraisal commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for their mid-term review (2011-16)

“CDRI had managed the balance of independence and engagement well”

CDRI being seen as:

- a constructive
- but critical actor in policy debate
- in a complex political environment.

WHAT RESOURCES TO IMPACT POLICY?

Financial resources, partner engagement
and branding

Building capacity and research talent
resource development

What does 'real' capacity building mean to
CDRI?

Financial resources, branding and partner engagement

A striving think tank needs to:

- *continually create an environment conducive for policy research while*
- *engaging policymakers and relevant partners to use its research outputs.*

To achieve this goal, think tank leaders shall:

- design a blueprint to foster creative fundraising ideas, passion for research and innovation, cultivate a strong brand, and
- develop an effective strategic partnerships

Partner engagement

Over decades CDRI has been able to lay solid foundations for fundraising through solid collaboration with most of the multilateral and bilateral partners in Cambodia's development.

Two genuine development partners

- Sida
- IDRC

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

A long-term partnership since the early years of CDRI

- Governance and public sector reform
- Education, skills and employment
- Climate change to grow steadily.



International Development Research Centre

Medium-to long-term partnership:

- **GMS Development Analysis Network (GMS-Net)**
- **Innovative programs on climate change and water resource governance**

In partnership with:

- **Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology,**
- **Tonle Sap Authority,**
- **Institute of Technology of Cambodia**
- **Royal University of Agriculture.**



**កិច្ចប្រជុំតុល្យ
ស្តីពី**

**“ការកែលម្អស្ថានភាពការងារក្នុងវិស័យកាត់ដេរ
នៅតំបន់មេគង្គ”**

សណ្ឋាគារ អ៊ិនធើនធើណិទេស
ប្រទេសកម្ពុជា
ថ្ងៃព្រហស្បតិ៍ ២៦ ខែមីនា ឆ្នាំ២០១៥

រៀបចំដោយ CDRI ដោយមានការ
មជ្ឈមណ្ឌល និងអភិវឌ្ឍន៍អន្តរជាតិ

Roundtable

on

**“Improving Working Conditions in Garments
in the Mekong”**

InterContinental Hotel
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Thursday, 26 March 2015

Organised by CDRI with support of
International Development Res
Centre (IDRC)



IDRC

Canada



Staunch support from the Board

Whose members are willing to tap into their own networks to fund an organization they believe in.

Chairman Dr Sok Siphana: Branding and fundraising efforts.

ED as “fundraiser-in-Chief”, to secure adequate funding for policy research.

Building capacity and resource development

“An organization is only as strong as its people and its partners”

Genuine local capacity building: A pool of talented experienced researchers with the right leadership would be able to team up to:

- Produce high quality peer-reviewed policy-relevant materials,
- Develop engaged partnerships and
- Build a strong brand attractive to potential funders
- Retain the best research talent should be an *obsession and a passion for think tank directors.*

Many experts were promoting “*capacity building*” that are in fact *short-term* training, of research foundations of dubious value.

What does ‘real’ capacity building mean to CDRI?

- Institutional needs analysis,
- Institutional redesign and strengthening,
- Upgrading of educational and professional qualifications and skills
- (through postgraduate education, professional development and training programs),
- Provision of expert technical advice and skills transfer,
- Institutional collaboration, personnel exchanges and internship schemes.

Larry Strange 2014

Longer-term institutional collaboration between regional research institutions, (ASEAN, China, South Korea and Japan) where longer-term economic and development relationships will lie is more *effective*.

Over-reliance on:

Expensive international consultants

Often short-term rather investments in building local capacity...

...means *capacity substitution* rather than capacity development, and entrenches *dependency*.

Study abroad as research talent
development strategy

14 staff (8 PhD, 6 MA)

Japan, Australia, USA, Canada and
Thailand

Sustainability science, Agriculture,
Economics and Development Policy).

CONCLUSION

This year CDRI is celebrating 25 years of policy research excellence.

- So much has been achieved.
- Much more needs to be done.
- Cambodia has also grown tremendously over the decades:
- Social changes are deep and real.
- Major new challenges loom on the horizon.
- The funding environment has evolved.
- ASEAN integration and China's rise will impact on Cambodia's political and economic agenda.

All these changes should be embraced.
CDRI needs to strive further to reach new heights.

The keys to achieving this ambition are:

- to continue to strengthen its internal capacity and develop its research talent
- while remaining deeply engaged with genuine committed partners
- and seeking to establish new robust partnerships.